

Making the Public Feel Welcome

Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process and every effort should be made to be fair and impartial in listening to public testimony. There should be no sign of partiality, prejudice or disrespect shown by a member of a Town board, commission or committee towards anyone participating in a public forum.

The public will feel most comfortable if they:

- are treated with politeness and respect
- have a fair and equitable opportunity to share their points of view
- feel that members of the board, commission or committee are really listening, with an open mind, to what they have to say
- are asked questions but not argued with or criticized
- never hear or feel a personal attack of any kind

Role of the Chair in welcoming the public.

- Ask speakers to identify themselves for the record.
- Enforce time limits so that all speakers have an equal opportunity to convey their views.
- Prevent verbal exchanges to break out between speakers and opponents in the audience, or between speakers and members of the board, commission or committee, or between speakers and staff.
- Follow meeting conduct guidelines set forth in the Town Code (see attached Ordinance 2074) to ensure discussions are orderly, focused, and impersonal.